WARNING OF THE COMING MUSLIM MESSIAH

The 1335 Years, the Sixth Age of the Church,
and the Reign of the Antichrist

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A hypothesis in Catholic eschatology, submitted to the judgment of the Church

2026

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Chapter I

Preface: A Convert's Warning

I was born a Muslim in Saudi Arabia, in the shadow of the two cities that a billion and a half people face in prayer. Arabic is my mother tongue; the Quran was the first scripture I knew; the traditions of Muhammad were the air I breathed. By the mercy of God I am today a Catholic, and it is as a Catholic — and as an Arab who loves his people and longs for their salvation — that I write this small book.

A convert from Islam reads the Apocalypse of Saint John differently than a man born in Christendom. Where others see obscure symbols, he recognizes things he has known all his life. When Saint John writes of a power that denies that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the convert does not have to search history for a candidate: he has heard that denial recited, beautifully and solemnly, five times a day. Saint John the Apostle gave us the test himself: "Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist, who denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22). No system in history has denied these two things so precisely, so explicitly, and for so long.

This book stands on the shoulders of a man who saw this clearly nearly four centuries ago: the Venerable Bartholomew Holzhauser, priest of Germany, whose commentary on the Apocalypse divides the history of the Church into seven ages and identifies the great scourge of the fifth and sixth trumpets with the empire of Muhammad. Holzhauser taught a principle that governs everything in these pages: the figure precedes the reality. The kingdom of Muhammad is the precursor; the Antichrist is the consummator. The first reigns in years; the second will reign in days. What the reader will find here is Holzhauser's framework, extended by one Arab convert's knowledge of Islam from the inside, and tested against the numbers of the prophet Daniel.

I must be honest with the reader from the first page about what this book is and is not. Where I cite Scripture, it carries the authority of Scripture. Where I cite the Venerable Holzhauser or approved private revelation, it carries the authority proper to such sources — which the Church permits us to weigh, and never obliges us to believe. And where I offer my own synthesis — the chronology counted from the year 692, the identification of the coming lawless one, the reading of our present moment — I offer it as a hypothesis, proposed by a son of the Church who submits every line of it to her judgment. Our Lord said plainly that of that day and hour no one knows, not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone (Matthew 24:36). Nothing in this book contradicts that, and if the years I propose pass quietly, then my arithmetic was wrong — and the reader should

conclude exactly that, and nothing more. The watchman can be mistaken about the hour and still be right about the night.

But if I am even partly right, then we are near the end of one of the longest clocks in Scripture, and what follows its final hour is not first a catastrophe but a mercy: an age of light, the conversion of the nations, and the healing of the world's oldest wound — before the last and briefest storm. It is to warn of that storm, and to call my own people out of its path, that I have written what follows.

Read it as a warning, test it as a hypothesis, and whatever you conclude about the dates — be ready.

Chapter II

The Seven Ages of the Church

The Venerable Bartholomew Holzhauser, writing in the seventeenth century, received and set down a key that unlocks the structure of the Apocalypse: the seven churches of Asia, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets are not merely first-century letters or distant catastrophes. They are a map of the whole life of the Church, from Pentecost to the Last Judgment, divided into seven successive ages. Each age has its own character, its own trials, its own saints, and its own place in the design of God.

The first age Holzhauser calls the sowing state. It runs from Christ and the Apostles until the persecutions began in earnest: the age of Ephesus, when the seed of the Gospel was cast into the soil of the nations by the Twelve and their disciples, watered by the preaching of Peter and Paul in Rome itself.

The second is the irrigating state, the age of the martyrs, figured by Smyrna, the suffering church. From Nero to Diocletian, for nearly three centuries, the Church was watered with blood, and the blood of the martyrs was the seed of Christians.

The third is the illuminating state, the age of the doctors, figured by Pergamos. From Constantine and the peace of the Church came the great councils and the great minds — Athanasius against Arius, Augustine against the Pelagians, the Fathers who gave the faith its lasting intellectual armor. It was an age of light, and also of the great heresies that made the light necessary.

The fourth is the peaceful state, figured by Thyatira: the long noon of Christendom, when Europe was Catholic, emperors were crowned by popes, the great cathedrals rose, and the faith shaped every law, art, and calendar of the West. Like every noon, it did not last.

The fifth is the state of affliction, figured by Sardis — the church with a name of being alive, yet dead. Holzhauser marks its opening with the revolt of Martin Luther and the wars that tore Christendom apart, and he foresaw that this age would be one of continual purgation: heresy multiplying into a thousand sects, nations falling away from the faith one by one, the authority of the Church mocked, morals dissolving, and at last a general apostasy in which men would live as though God were not. Every reader may judge for himself whether the world outside his window belongs to this description. This is our age. We were born in it, and it is now, by every sign, far advanced — and Holzhauser teaches that an age far advanced is an age near its end.

The sixth age is the state of consolation, figured by Philadelphia, the church of brotherly love, to whom the Lord says: I have set before thee an open door, which no man can shut. Holzhauser foretells that this age will open with an intervention of God so mighty that the world will be changed by it: a holy pope and a great monarch will arise, the enemies of the Church will be broken, the sects will wither, and the nations — including, at last, the peoples long held under the crescent — will stream into the one fold of the one Shepherd. It will be an age of peace such as men have not known since the fourth age, and greater; an age in which the Gospel is preached to every creature and the sacrifice of the Mass is offered in every land, fulfilling the word of Malachias: from the rising of the sun even to the going down, in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation. The chapters that follow will argue that the doorway into this age is nearer than the world suspects, and that its opening will deal the wound of death to the kingdom that has denied the Son for more than twelve centuries.

The seventh and last age is the state of desolation, figured by Laodicea, the lukewarm church. When the long peace of the sixth age has done its work, and men have again grown cold in the midst of abundance, the last enemy will be permitted his brief hour. In this age the son of perdition will arise, the lawless one whom Saint Paul foretold, and his reign — mercifully short, counted not in years but in days — will bring the greatest tribulation the world has seen or will see. Against him God will send His two witnesses; at his fall the last days of the world will run out swiftly; and then the Son of Man will appear upon the clouds with power and great majesty.

Seven ages, and we stand in the fifth, near its border with the sixth. The task of the next chapters is to show where that border lies — for Scripture itself, in the book of Daniel, gives us a clock, and tells us the very event from which to start counting.

Chapter III

The Abomination of Desolation: Daniel's Clock and Where It Begins

Every countdown needs a starting point, and the prophet Daniel gives us his with unusual precision. In the final chapter of his book, the angel tells him: "And from the time when the continual sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination unto desolation shall be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh unto a thousand three hundred thirty-five days" (Daniel 12:11-12). Two numbers, one event to count from: the setting up of the abomination of desolation.

What is this abomination? Our Lord Himself told us where to look for it: "When therefore you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place — he that readeth, let him understand" (Matthew 24:15). The holy place. Not merely in the world, not merely in Jerusalem, but standing in the holy place itself: the Temple Mount, mount Moriah, where Abraham bound Isaac, where Solomon built the house of the Lord, where the veil was rent at the death of Christ.

Now let the reader consider what stands on that exact spot today, and has stood there for more than twelve centuries. In the year 691-692 of our era, the caliph Abd al-Malik completed upon the Temple Mount the shrine called the Dome of the Rock. It is not merely a building on holy ground. Around its octagonal arcade, in the oldest surviving monumental inscription of Islam, run these words, set there deliberately, facing the site of the Holy of Holies: that God is one, that He has no son, that He does not beget and is not begotten, and that those who say God is the Messiah, or that God is a Trinity, speak an excess against Him. The first great monument of the new religion was erected on the precise site of the sanctuary of the Old Covenant, and its founding inscription is a formal, permanent, public denial of the Incarnation and the Trinity — the very denial by which Saint John defines antichrist: "he who denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22).

An abomination, in the language of Scripture, is an idolatrous or blasphemous object set up where it defiles what is holy. Desolation is what it proclaims and produces: on that mount the continual sacrifice of the Old Law had ceased since the year 70, and where the new and eternal sacrifice of the Mass should have ascended — in the city where it was instituted — there rose instead a monument denying that the Victim of that sacrifice is the Son of God. It is difficult to imagine an event in all of history that answers Daniel's description more exactly, in substance, in location, and in permanence. This book therefore takes the year 692 as the anchor of Daniel's

clock: the year the abomination was set up in the holy place.

And here the reader meets a confirmation so strange that this author hesitated to include it, and includes it only with every caution stated plainly. Saint John writes: "He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man: and the number of him is six hundred sixty-six" (Apocalypse 13:18). The Fathers counted this number in the letters of names, and that remains the primary sense of the verse. But numbers in Scripture often carry more than one layer, and a convert from Islam cannot help noticing the following.

The visions attributed to Anne Catherine Emmerich — set down by Clemens Brentano, whose transmission the Church has never certified, so the reader must weigh what follows accordingly — contain a chronology of the life of Christ. She states that Christ was born before the year 3997 of the world was complete, some seven years and a portion earlier than our common reckoning: that is, near the end of the year we call 8 BC. She states further that He lived thirty-three years and three times six weeks. Follow the arithmetic, remembering that there is no year zero: His thirty-third birthday falls in late AD 26, and eighteen weeks more reaches the Pasch of the year AD 27. By her numbers, the Redemption was accomplished on the Cross in the spring of AD 27.

Now add to the year of the Crucifixion the number of the beast: 27 + 666 = 693. Within a single year of the completion of the Dome of the Rock. If Emmerich's figures are sound, then six hundred sixty-six years after the world was redeemed on Golgotha, the abomination denying that Redemption was completed on the mount beside it. The author states honestly that the common scholarly dating of the Crucifixion is AD 30 or 33, that Luke 3:1 is difficult to reconcile with AD 27, and that no doctrine may be built on Brentano's numbers. He offers the coincidence for what it is: a curiosity that made an Arab convert's hands tremble, standing at the margin of the argument, not in its foundation. The foundation is Daniel, Matthew, and the stones of the Dome itself, which any man may go and read.

The clock, then, begins at 692. Daniel gives three numbers to count upon it — 1260, 1290, and 1335 — and the next two chapters will explain first *how* to count them, according to the principle of figure and reality taught by the Venerable Holzhauser, and then *what dates they yield*. For if days are to be counted as years, as the prophets themselves counted them, then the longest of Daniel's numbers runs out in the year 2027 — and the reader deserves to see, step by step, both why that reckoning is plausible and what it would mean if it is true.

Chapter IV

Figure and Reality: The Two Scales of the Prophecy

The reader now holds a starting point — the year 692 — and three numbers: 1260, 1290, 1335. But before counting, he must learn how to count, for the prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse run on two scales at once, and confusing them has wrecked many an interpreter. The key to the two scales was set down by the Venerable Holzhauser in his commentary on the eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse, and it is the intellectual heart of this book.

Scripture itself establishes the first scale. When the prophet Ezechiel was commanded to lie upon his side bearing the iniquity of Israel, God told him plainly: "a day for a year, a day for a year, I have appointed to thee" (Ezechiel 4:6). When the spies' forty days of unbelief were punished with forty years of wandering, the Lord declared the rule: "according to the number of the forty days in which you viewed the land, a year shall be counted for a day" (Numbers 14:34). And Daniel's own prophecy of the seventy weeks — weeks which every ancient interpreter, Jewish and Christian, understood as weeks of years, four hundred ninety years reaching from the restoration of Jerusalem to the Messiah — is the supreme proof that in Daniel's visions, days stand for years. The prophetic day is a year: this is not a modern invention but the Bible's own arithmetic, confirmed by the most exactly fulfilled prophecy in the Old Testament.

Yet Our Lord speaks of the final tribulation as brief — so brief that "unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved" (Matthew 24:21-22) — and Saint Paul describes the lawless one as a single man, revealed and then destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8). A single man does not reign twelve centuries. So the same numbers that measure centuries in one place must measure literal days in another. How can both be true?

Holzhauser's answer is the principle of figure and reality. Commenting on the forty-two months of the beast, he writes that the final desolation proceeds "from the empire of Muhammad and ending in that of Antichrist; that is, the figure becomes reality, and the reign of the precursor becomes the consummator of all iniquity." The second empire, he says, will be born from the first and draw its power from the first; and because of this affinity between them, "God also establishes a relation and affinity of time between them, so that the second reign will last as many days as the first lasted years." One number, two fulfillments: read in prophetic days — that is, years — it measures the long kingdom of the precursor; read in natural days, it measures the short reign of the consummator. The kingdom of Muhammad is the figure, sprawling across centuries; the Antichrist is the reality, compressed into a final three and a half years. As Saint John the Baptist went before

the first coming of Christ in the spirit and power of Elias, so this dark kingdom goes before the coming of the son of perdition, preparing his way, teaching his creed, and denying in advance the Lord he will deny.

The reader should know, in honesty, that Holzhauser worked the arithmetic of the forty-two months in his own manner, reckoning by solar months to a total of one thousand two hundred seventy-seven years and a half, where this book follows Daniel's plain figures of 1260, 1290, and 1335. The principle is his; the precise application here is the author's, and the author says so plainly rather than sheltering his sums under a Venerable's name. What is borrowed from Holzhauser is the architecture: one clock, two scales; a precursor measured in years, a consummator measured in days; the figure first, then the reality.

And notice how perfectly the architecture fits what we know. The kingdom that arose in the seventh century answers the description of a precursor in every particular. It denies precisely what the Antichrist will deny — that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, crucified and risen. It honors Jesus, as the Antichrist's system will, but as a servant only, a prophet who will return not to reign as God but to submit to another. It conquered, in its first great expansion, half of Christendom — the churches of Africa where Augustine taught, of Egypt, of Syria, of Asia Minor where the seven churches of the Apocalypse once burned as lampstands — a wound to the Church whose scale no other power in history approaches. And it has endured, unbroken, from the setting up of the abomination until this hour: the longest-lived organized denial of the Sonship of Christ the world has ever contained. If God appointed a figure to precede the final lawless one, no candidate in thirteen centuries of history so much as rivals this one.

The precursor reigns in years; the consummator will reign in days. The figure's years are almost spent; and when they are spent, the prophecies foretell not the immediate rise of the consummator, but first a wound — a mortal wound to the beast — and an age of light between the two reigns. The next chapter counts the years, and shows the reader where, if this reckoning is true, the wound falls.

Chapter V

The Three Numbers: 1260, 1290, 1335

Daniel's angel gives three measures, and their spacing is itself instructive: 1260, then thirty more to 1290, then forty-five more to 1335. The numbers form a staircase, and the angel attaches the blessing not to the first step but to the last: "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh unto a thousand three hundred thirty-five days." Whatever the three numbers mark, the summit — the thing worth waiting for, the blessing — arrives at 1335. Counted as year-days from the setting up of the abomination in 692, the staircase yields three years of our era: 1952, 1982, and 2027.

The author will not pretend these dates are equally luminous. The last is the argument of this book; the first two he offers with an open hand, inviting the reader to weigh them. Count 1260 years from 692 and you arrive at 1952 — and the eye falls at once on what happened immediately before it: after eighteen centuries of dispersion, the Jewish people returned to statehood in the land of Israel in 1948, and by 1952 the great ingathering of the first years — Jews streaming in from Yemen, from Iraq, from the ruins of Europe — had doubled the population of the new state and set it on its feet. Jerusalem, trodden down by the nations since the year 70, had begun to pass back into Jewish hands, though the Temple Mount itself, crowned still by the abomination, did not fall to them until 1967. Our Lord said that Jerusalem would be trodden down "till the times of the nations be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24), and Daniel's first number, counted from the abomination, lands precisely in the years when that treading-down visibly began to end. Count 1290 years and you arrive at 1982 — and here the author confesses the correspondence is less sharp, and says so rather than force it. He notes only that the years around it hold the attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima (1981), the pope's consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart (1982, completed 1984), and the beginning of the collapse of the atheist empire in the East — the events, in short, by which the Fatima drama entered its final act. Whether that is Daniel's intent, the author does not claim to know. A staircase may have a worn step and still lead where it leads.

It leads to 1335, and the year 2027. If the reckoning of this book is right, that year — or the season around it, for the author claims no power to name a month — brings the blessing the angel spoke of: the event this book calls the great warning and miracle, the intervention of God that opens the sixth age, converts the nations, and deals the mortal wound to the kingdom of the precursor. The next chapter describes what the prophecies and the approved apparitions say of that intervention. Here the author owes the reader something else first: the terms of failure.

For the reader has every right to ask: has this game not been played before? It has. Year-day reckonings have been drawn up and have died quietly on the calendar — 1260 counted from other starting points yielded 1798 to one generation and 1866 to another, and their books now molder unread. The author knows this history, and it is exactly why he anchors everything to one starting point chosen on its merits *before* any date was computed: the abomination standing in the holy place, 692, the one event in all history that answers Daniel's description in substance, site, and inscription. He does not reserve a second anchor to fall back upon. If the year 2027 passes, and the year following it, and the kingdom of the abomination stands unwounded and the Church unconsoled, then the reader must conclude — and the author binds himself now, in print, to conclude with him — that this reckoning was wrong: not that the count must be restarted from some newly discovered year, not that the numbers meant something subtler all along, but simply that a watchman mistook the hour. The faith of the Church does not hang on this arithmetic, and neither should the reader's. Our Lord's word stands over every page of this book: of that day and hour no one knows.

But the author does not believe he has mistaken the hour, and he asks the reader to notice one thing more before turning the page. The angel told Daniel to seal the book "even to the time of the end," when "many shall pass over, and knowledge shall be multiplied" (Daniel 12:4). We live in the one generation in which travel and knowledge have multiplied beyond every measure of the past — and in which, for the first time since 692, the whole staircase of Daniel's numbers, counted from the abomination all men can see standing in the holy place, fits inside the lifetime of readers now living. The last step is at hand. What awaits at the top of the stairs — the consolation before the storm — is the subject of the chapter that follows.

Chapter VI

The Sixth Age: The Consolation, the Conversion of the Nations, and the Mortal Wound

What happens when the 1335 years run out? Saint John saw it in a single strange image: one of the heads of the beast "as it were slain to death: and his death's wound was healed" (Apocalypse 13:3). A wound of death, then — but not annihilation; a wound that is later, for a short time, healed. The reader should hold both halves of the image from the start, for the whole architecture of the last two ages hangs on it: first the wounding of the beastly kingdom, then a long consolation, and only afterward the brief healing of the wound in the person of the consummator. This chapter concerns the wounding and the consolation.

Notice first what kind of wound it must be. The kingdom of the precursor is not, at its root, an army or an empire of borders; armies it has lost many times and survived. It is a creed — a denial, recited daily by a fifth of mankind, that God has a Son. A mortal wound to such a kingdom is not delivered by weapons, and the reader may set aside every fantasy of crusade; a war of conquest could no more kill this kingdom than the sword of Pilate could kill the Church. The only wound that is mortal to a creed is the public, undeniable demonstration that it is false. The head is slain when the denial dies in the hearts of those who recited it — when the muezzin's cry that God has no son is answered from heaven, and the millions who faced Mecca at dawn face the Blessed Sacrament by evening. The mortal wound, in short, is a miracle of conversion: the greatest since Pentecost, and in scale far greater.

That such an intervention is coming is the concordant testimony of the sources this book has leaned on throughout — and the author will, as always, label each according to its weight. Scripture promises it in figure: Malachias foretold a day when "from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation" (Malachias 1:11) — a prophecy the Fathers read of the Mass, and which has never yet been fulfilled to the letter, for there remains a vast belt of the earth, from the Atlantic to the islands of the east, where the clean oblation is forbidden or hidden and the going-down of the sun hears another name proclaimed. Saint Paul promises it in mystery: the blindness of Israel endures only "until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved" (Romans 11:25-26) — a fullness, note, that must include the nations still outside. And Our Lord promises it in plain words: "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come" (Matthew

24:14). The consummation does not come until the testimony is complete; therefore the completion of the testimony precedes it; therefore between our apostate hour and the end there stands, of necessity, an age of preaching and ingathering. The sixth age is not pious optimism. It is the logical space the Gospel itself demands.

The Venerable Holzhauser fills that space with particulars. In the sixth age, the age of Philadelphia and the open door, he foresees a holy pope and a great monarch raised up together; the sects withering; the Turk — his word for the Muhammadan power — broken; councils restoring discipline; and the nations entering the Church in such numbers that the earth enjoys a peace and a splendor of religion surpassing even the fourth age. To this the approved apparitions of the Blessed Virgin add their voice, and the author weighs them carefully. At Fatima in 1917 — an apparition the Church has approved, at a place bearing, by God's strange providence, the name of Muhammad's own daughter — Our Lady promised without condition: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph... and a period of peace will be granted to the world." The Mother of God does not speak idly, and her triumph and period of peace are, the author submits, Holzhauser's sixth age seen from heaven's side. Beyond the approved apparitions lie others — Garabandal with its promise of a worldwide warning and a great miracle, and more recent claimed apparitions still under the Church's judgment — which speak in remarkably convergent terms of a single act of God in which every soul on earth will see itself as God sees it, followed by a public miracle that will convert multitudes. The author reports this convergence honestly and builds nothing upon it: these apparitions are not approved, and if the Church one day rejects them, this chapter loses an illustration and keeps its argument. The argument rests on Malachias, Paul, and the Lord's own promise.

Now consider what such an event means for the peoples of the crescent — and here the author writes of his own blood. Islam is not pagan; it is, as the abomination's inscription shows, a rejection *aimed at* the Christian claim, and therefore uniquely poised to reverse. The Quran itself calls Jesus the Word of God and a Spirit from Him, born of a virgin, sinless, alive in heaven, and coming again — titles and honors it grants to no other man, not even Muhammad. A Muslim is a man who has been taught to revere Jesus with his mind while denying Him with his creed; he stands nearer to the threshold than the atheist or the idolater, needing not to learn a new Jesus but to let the one he honors be who He said He is. When the demonstration comes — when God vindicates the Sonship of Christ before the eyes of all flesh — the author believes his people will not be the last through the door but among the first, and in torrents: the sons of Ismael, of whom it was promised to Abraham that in his seed *all* the nations of the earth would be blessed, coming home at last to the Seed. The wound of death to the creed will be, for the peoples who held it, the healing of every wound; the desolation of the abomination will end in the consolation of the nations; and on the mount where the inscription denied the Son, the clean oblation will at last be offered.

Yet Saint John's image had two halves, and the second must not be forgotten in the joy of the first: *the death's wound was healed*. Not every heart will yield to the demonstration; there is a freedom in man that no evidence can force, and Scripture foresees a remnant of the old denial surviving the wound — embers under the ash of the sixth age, awaiting the one who will breathe on them. Who that remnant may be, why it endures, and how from it arises the consummator whose brief reign is the seventh age — these are the questions of the next two chapters.

Chapter VII

The Remnant of the Beast: The Embers Under the Ash

Every great conversion in history has left a remainder. When Rome bowed to Christ, paganism did not vanish in a day; it lingered in the countryside — the *pagani*, the villagers — for centuries. When the Gospel took the barbarian north, the old gods retreated but were long in dying. Grace does not abolish freedom, and no demonstration, however divine, compels the will: the Pharisees watched Lazarus walk out of his tomb and responded by plotting to kill Lazarus. So Scripture, foreseeing the great conversion of the sixth age, foresees also its remainder. The head is slain to death — but the beast is not cast into the lake of fire at the wounding; that comes only at the end of the seventh age (Apocalypse 19:20). Between the wound and the healing, something of the old kingdom survives: reduced, humiliated, stripped of its multitudes, but alive. Embers under the ash.

Why would any man cling to the denial after the demonstration? The author, who was raised inside the house he is describing, can name the reasons, and they are not mysterious. There is the iron identification of creed with honor: for some men, to convert is not to change one's mind but to betray one's fathers, and they would sooner be wrong with their ancestors than right with strangers. There is the entanglement of religion with rule: wherever a throne, a law, a flag, and an economy have been built upon the creed, the creed's death is the regime's death, and regimes do not consent to die — they will keep the pilgrimage running and the anthem playing after the faith that justified them has drained away, as a body may be kept breathing after the soul is gone. There is wounded pride on the scale of a civilization: the demonstration that converts the humble will embitter the proud, for it will be, to them, the public defeat of everything they were. And there is, last and deepest, the mystery of iniquity itself — that ancient will which has denied the Son since before Eden, and which will not surrender its human foothold while any foothold remains.

Where will the embers lie? Here the author passes explicitly from argument to speculation, and marks the border for the reader as he promised to do. It is natural to look toward the creed's own heartland — the peninsula of its birth, the custodianship of its two sanctuaries, the kingdom whose very flag bears the denial in white script upon green, whose law is the creed's law, whose place among the nations is inseparable from the shrine at its center. A power so constituted has, of all powers on earth, the most to lose by the creed's death and the most machinery for preserving its shell; if any throne keeps the old fire banked through the sixth age, the author's eye falls first there, on his own homeland. But he states plainly what this guess is worth: it is a reading of present arrangements projected onto a future that the great miracle will transform beyond anyone's mapping. The same conversion that empties the creed may empty that peninsula's resistance too —

the author's own existence proves that Saudi blood is no barrier to Christ, and he would rejoice to be wrong about his birthplace and right only about the principle. The principle is what Scripture gives: a remnant persists; its location is God's secret. Perhaps it will be a state; perhaps a diaspora; perhaps a hidden brotherhood with no flag at all, the inverted mirror of the catacomb Church — a catacomb of the denial, biding its hour inside a Catholic world.

For that is the remnant's role in the drama: to bide. The embers do not merely survive the sixth age; they await the breath that will make them flame. Saint John says the healing of the death's wound is the very thing that makes the world wonder after the beast (Apocalypse 13:3) — the resurrection-parody, the impossible return. A kingdom that all men saw slain, standing again: this is the consummator's opening miracle, his counterfeit Easter, and it requires precisely what this chapter has described — a body to raise. The remnant is that body. From it, at the hour appointed, when the long peace has grown lukewarm and the sons of the converted have forgotten what their fathers saw, there will arise the man in whom the figure becomes reality: the one who heals the wound, restores the denial, and reigns his numbered days.

Who he is, by what signs he may be known, and what Scripture and the tradition say of his brief and terrible hour — this is the matter of the next chapter, and the warning for which this book is named.

Chapter VIII

The Seventh Age and the Muslim Messiah

The long peace will end as every peace has ended: in forgetfulness. The sons of the sixth age will inherit the greatest treasure since Eden — a converted world, a universal Mass, the memory of the miracle — and Holzhauser foresees that they will grow lukewarm in the midst of it, as Laodicea did: "thou sayest: I am rich... and knowest not that thou art wretched" (Apocalypse 3:17). Into that lukewarm world, out of the embers described in the last chapter, will come the consummator. Saint Paul gives the sequence with legal precision: "the day of the Lord shall not come, unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Mark the order, for it is the spine of this book's warning: *before* Christ returns, the falling away; *before* Christ returns, the lawless one revealed. Therefore — let the reader write this rule where he will not lose it — **the first "messiah" to appear on the world's stage is not Christ. He is the counterfeit.** Our Lord said it Himself: "I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive" (John 5:43).

Now the author advances the thesis for which this book exists, and he advances it under his own name and not the tradition's — for the reader should know honestly that the Fathers, reading Genesis 49 and the omission of Dan from the sealed tribes, generally expected the son of perdition to arise from Jewry, and the author does not erase their testimony. He submits, rather, a consideration the Fathers could not weigh, because the kingdom of the precursor arose after most of them wrote: *the counterfeit will come from the system built to receive him.* And there exists on earth exactly one system — one and a half billion strong — that has spent thirteen centuries formally awaiting a Jesus who is not the Son of God.

Let the reader who was not raised in that system learn what the author was taught as a child. Islamic tradition, in its authoritative collections, foretells that Isa the son of Maryam — Jesus, son of Mary — will descend from heaven in the last days: a Jesus who returns not to be worshipped but to worship; who will pray behind another man, the Mahdi; who will, in the tradition's own words, *break the cross* — abolish the faith of the crucifixion — kill the swine, abolish the tribute, and make the whole earth one religion under the old denial. Consider what this means. The precursor's system does not merely deny the Son; it holds, ready-made and warm, a script for a false Christ: a returning "Jesus" whose first public work is the destruction of Christianity. No forger of prophecy could have designed a neater vestment for the man of sin to step into. When the wound of the sixth age has been dealt and the remnant waits in humiliation, what could raise the embers to flame in a single hour but this — a man appearing out of heaven's direction with signs and lying wonders (2

Thessalonians 2:9), proclaiming himself Isa returned, vindicating the denial the whole world had abandoned, and healing the death's wound before mankind's eyes? The lukewarm sons of the converted, who know the prophecies say Jesus will return, will meet a man saying *I am he* — and the rule above is their only armor: the first to come is the counterfeit.

Test him also by Saint John's touchstone, which no disguise survives: "Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist" (1 John 2:22). Here is the terrible elegance of the counterfeit: he will deny that Jesus is the Christ *while claiming to be Jesus* — the creature wearing the Name while refusing the Sonship, "shewing himself as if he were God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4) in the only manner the old denial permits: as God's exalted servant enthroned over all religion. And by a second touchstone, which the next chapters will unfold: Daniel says that from his hand "the continual sacrifice shall be taken away" (Daniel 12:11). The Mass — the clean oblation then ascending from every altar on earth — he will abolish; and the author sets down here the double test he promised in the preface, crude in form but sound in substance, by which the simplest believer of that day may know the son of perdition against every wonder: *the man claiming to be the returned Jesus, who denies that Jesus is the Son of God, and who abolishes the Mass — he, and no other, is the Antichrist.*

His hour will be short, and here the two scales of the earlier chapter complete their symmetry. The figure reigned 1260 prophetic days — twelve centuries and a half of years; the reality reigns 1260 *natural* days — the forty-two months of Apocalypse 13:5, three years and a half, the same span as the ministry of the Lord he counterfeits. In that span Holzhauser places the greatest tribulation of history: the caliphate of the counterfeit stretched this time over the whole earth and not the half; the Church driven under ground, her priests hunted, her sacrifice offered in cellars and forests as once in the catacombs; the mark on hand and forehead without which none may buy or sell; the false wonders; the slaughter of the saints. And against him, for the same 1260 days, God will send the two witnesses — of whom a later chapter will speak — to contest his miracles with true ones, until the hour when, his days accomplished, "the Lord Jesus shall kill him with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

But the counterfeit does not rise alone. A false Christ requires a false Church to receive him, and a false prophet to anoint him — a second beast, says Saint John, with two horns *like a lamb's*, who speaks as a dragon (Apocalypse 13:11). Of that man — the traitor within, the antipope of the dark church — and of the visions that saw Rome divided against itself, the next chapter must speak.

Chapter IX

The False Prophet and the Antipope: The Dark Church

Saint John saw the counterfeit's herald with precision: "another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns, like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon" (Apocalypse 13:11). Every word is a portrait. *Like a lamb* — the Lamb is Christ, and the lamb's horns are the semblance of Christ's authority: the appearance of a shepherd, a hierarch, a man of religion. *Spoke as a dragon* — the voice beneath the vestments is the ancient serpent's. His office is priestly in form and satanic in content: "he causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to adore the first beast" (13:12) — he is a directer of worship, a maker of adoration, the liturgist of the counterfeit. He works the signs (fire from heaven, the speaking image, the wonders that seduce), he institutes the mark, and Scripture thereafter names him simply *the false prophet* (16:13, 19:20). Where the first beast is a false Christ, the second is a false Peter: the religious authority who takes the world's shepherd's crook and uses it to herd the flock to the wolf.

Now the reader must let the author draw a line in ink, because on this point confusion is not merely error but blasphemy against the promises of Christ. **The false prophet will not be the pope.** He cannot be. Our Lord's word to Peter — "the gates of hell shall not prevail" (Matthew 16:18), "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:32) — is not a forecast but a guarantee, and the Church teaches infallibly that the See of Peter cannot bind the faithful to apostasy. What the last days will produce is something the Church has already survived dozens of times in her history and therefore knows by name: an **antipope** — a man seated by fraud or force upon a throne not his, wearing white he has no right to wear, obeyed by the world and by the worldly within the Church, while the true successor of Peter is exiled, hidden, or martyred. The distinction is everything. The dark church of the last days will not be the Catholic Church fallen; it will be a *counterfeit* of the Catholic Church, occupying her buildings, aping her rites, stealing her name — while the true Church, small and stripped and faithful, goes underground with her true pope, exactly as the true sacrifice goes into the cellars. The lamb's horns without the Lamb.

That Rome itself will be the stage of this division, the visions of the last two centuries assert with a strange unanimity — and the author weighs them, as always, by their proper measure. The visions set down under the name of Anne Catherine Emmerich (through Brentano's pen, with all the reservations already stated) describe the sight in unforgettable images: *two* churches in Rome — one, a great dark church without an altar and without the Blessed Sacrament, "a church of human make," built by men of every sect in false ecumenical concord, empty of God and full of abomination; the other the true Church, persecuted, reduced, luminous; and a pope in captivity, and

"the relationship between two popes." She saw the Church so undermined that "secret sects" had penetrated to her very heart, and the counterfeit congregation growing while the faithful remnant shrank. Approved and far weightier is the testimony of La Salette (1846), whose secret warns that Rome would face the gravest trial of faith at her very center; and Our Lady of Fatima's third secret, published in 2000, shows the vision of a "bishop dressed in white" cut down among his flock in a ruined city — the shepherd struck, as Zacharias foretold, that the sheep may be scattered (Zacharias 13:7). None of these visions, the author notes plainly, names dates or offices, and none may be pressed beyond its wording; but their convergence on one picture — Rome divided, a true shepherd suffering, a counterfeit assembly ascendant — is what the reader should carry forward.

Assemble now the pieces this book has laid out, and watch how they interlock. The seventh age opens with the counterfeit messiah rising from the remnant of the old denial. But a Muslim Isa, however wondrous his signs, cannot by himself seduce a Catholic world; the sons of the sixth age, however lukewarm, will not follow a voice from outside the Church. They must be betrayed from *within* — handed over by a shepherd's voice. This is the false prophet's precise function in the drama, and the reason the dragon needs him: the antipope of the dark church will be the bridge. He will proclaim, from the stolen chair, the great reconciliation — that the returned "Isa" is indeed the Christ of all religions; that the age of division between crescent and cross is ended; that the Mass, sign of a bloody and divisive theology of sacrifice, must give way to a purified universal worship. He will validate the counterfeit's claim with the counterfeit of Peter's authority, perform wonders in his sight — and Daniel's mark will be fulfilled from inside the sanctuary: the continual sacrifice taken away not by invaders breaking down the doors, but by a decree read from the altar itself. "The abomination of desolation, standing in the holy place" — the pattern of 692 consummated: as the first abomination rose on the Temple Mount, the last will be enthroned in the sanctuary of the New Covenant. And the technological wonders Saint John describes — fire called down, the *image* of the beast given breath and speech so that the world adores a speaking likeness (13:13-15) — will in that day need no demon to accomplish what the reader's own generation has already learned to build; the author leaves the point to the reader's meditation.

The faithful of that hour will thus face the cruelest test ever set before believers: *two* men claiming Christ's identity and Peter's authority — a false Jesus above, a false Peter below — with the true pope hidden and the true Mass in the catacombs. Their armor will be what this book has tried to forge into rules simple enough to survive persecution: the first "messiah" to appear is the counterfeit; the man who denies the Sonship while wearing the Name is the Antichrist; the shepherd who abolishes the Mass has, by that act, unmasked himself, whatever throne he sits on. Hold to the Sacrifice, and you cannot be deceived; the dark church is known most simply by what Emmerich's vision showed at its heart — *nothing.* No altar. No tabernacle. The counterfeit of everything except the one thing that cannot be counterfeited.

Where, then, in those days is Babylon the great — the harlot city drunk with the blood of the saints, whom the beast carries and then devours? The tradition's answer, and the modern speculation that competes with it, is the matter of the chapter that follows.

Chapter X

Babylon the Great: The Harlot and the Two Candidates

Chapters seventeen and eighteen of the Apocalypse turn from the beast to the woman who rides him: "the great harlot, who sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (Apocalypse 17:1-2) — arrayed in purple and scarlet, drunk "with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17:6), her name Babylon the great, her doom to be hated by the very beast that carried her: "the ten horns... shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire" (17:16). Mark that last verse before all else, for it is the key to the woman's role in the drama: the harlot is not the beast's bride but his vehicle — a religious-commercial power the counterfeit *uses* on his way to the throne and then destroys when her use is spent. Whoever Babylon is, she is a traitor betrayed.

Saint John gives identifiers, and honesty requires listing them all. The woman sits on "seven mountains" (17:9). She "is the great city, which hath kingdom over the kings of the earth" (17:18) — hath, present tense, in John's own day. She is a city of maritime commerce so vast that at her fall "every shipmaster, and all that sail into the lake" weep over her (18:17-19), a market of gold, silk, wine, "and slaves, and souls of men" (18:13). And she is drunk with the martyrs' blood. The Fathers, reading these marks in the first centuries, answered with one voice: Babylon is Rome — the city of seven hills, mistress of the kings of the earth when John wrote, drunk with the blood of Peter, Paul, and the martyrs of Nero's gardens. On this the tradition is not divided, and this book does not divide from it.

But *which* Rome, and *when*? Here the Catholic interpreters of the last days — Father Berry's commentary of 1921 stands for many — draw the picture that fits this book's drama exactly: not pagan Rome only, whose judgment was a first fulfillment, and never the Catholic Church, but **apostate Rome of the end**: the eternal city in the days after the true pope has been driven out or struck down, when the dark church of the antipope holds her basilicas and the counterfeit's system holds her markets. Rome without Peter is just Babylon again — that is the tradition's terrible equation. The harlot's purple and scarlet are stolen vestments; her golden cup "full of the abomination" (17:4) is the counterfeit of the chalice; her fornication with the kings of the earth is the dark church's concordat with the counterfeit messiah, the unholy alliance the last chapter described. And her end fits the alliance's logic: when the Muslim Isa has used the antipope's church to seduce the Christian world, the old denial's contempt for her will out — the beast and his horns will turn, strip, and burn the city that crowned him, and heaven will sing over her ashes

(Apocalypse 19:1-3). The reader of Emmerich will recall the dark church's fate in her visions; the reader of history will recall that the counterfeit's system has never long tolerated the partners of its rise.

The author must now deal honestly with a second candidate, urged in our own generation and touching his own homeland: that Babylon is **Mecca**, and the harlot's kingdom the oil-wealthy custodianship of the sanctuaries — a city that sits indeed upon "many waters" of "peoples, and nations, and tongues" (17:15), whose pilgrimage is the greatest religious commerce on earth, whose wealth has made the kings of the earth her suitors, and who would ride the counterfeit's beast as no other city could. The author confesses the picture's appeal — it would seal his book's symmetry, Babylon and beast both rising from the precursor's house — and precisely for that reason he has tested it coldly, and reports that it fails the apostle's identifiers. Mecca sits on no seven mountains of prophetic fame; she held no "kingdom over the kings of the earth" in John's day, being then an obscure caravan town; no shipmasters weep for her, who has no port; and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus — the mark John names *twice* — is not on her hands in the first century, for she had yet no saints to slay. Every identifier must be relocated to the future and reassigned by force for the Mecca reading to stand, and an interpretation that must bend every text is announcing its own weakness. The author therefore sets Mecca down as a *secondary* speculation at most — conceivable only if the seventh age so remakes the world's religious economy that the counterfeit crowns the old sanctuary anew — and he counsels the reader who meets this theory elsewhere to ask its preachers John's five questions, and watch the answers bend. The strong reading needs no bending: Rome apostate, the dark church enthroned and then devoured. And there is a fitness in it that the convert feels keenly: the drama of the end is not, at its center, the crescent's city judged — the crescent's multitudes will by then be Catholic — but the apostasy of the *baptized*; for judgment begins at the house of God (1 Peter 4:17), and the harlot's sin is not that she never knew the Bridegroom, but that she did.

One thread of the tapestry remains. Through all the counterfeit's 1260 days — while the dark church reigns and Babylon rides — two voices will not be silenced, working true wonders against his false ones, clothed in sackcloth in the streets of Jerusalem itself. Of Enoch and Elijah, the two witnesses, and of the secret Masses of the underground Church, the next chapter speaks.

Chapter XI

The Two Witnesses and the Church of the Catacombs

Through the whole of the counterfeit's reign, God will not leave the world without testimony. "And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth" (Apocalypse 11:3). The number is the counterfeit's own — his forty-two months answered day for day — for the witnesses are heaven's countermeasure, matched to the measure of the evil they contest. Their contest, as the Venerable Holzhauser expounds it in the eleventh chapter of his commentary — the last great chapter he completed, and the summit of his book — is the final revision of the oldest duel in Scripture: Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh, prodigy against prodigy, the magicians imitating the servants of God "but not equalling them." So it will be at the end: the son of perdition working his lying wonders, and against him two men working true ones — fire consuming those sent to seize them, the heavens shut from rain, waters turned to blood, "and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they will" (11:6).

Who are they? Holzhauser answers without hesitation, and the tradition of the Fathers answers with him: **Enoch and Elijah** — the two men of whom Scripture records that they did not die. "Enoch walked with God, and was seen no more: because God took him" (Genesis 5:24); Elijah "went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (4 Kings 2:11). The old books say of the first that he was translated "that he may give repentance to the nations" (Ecclesiasticus 44:16), and of the second that he is "registered in the judgments of times, to appease the wrath of the Lord... and to restore the tribes of Jacob" (Ecclesiasticus 48:10); and Our Lord Himself, after John the Baptist had come in Elijah's spirit, still spoke of a fulfillment yet future: "Elijah indeed shall come, and restore all things" (Matthew 17:11). Two men held back from death, reserved alive across the ages for one appointed errand: as the Baptist was the precursor of the first coming, so these two are the precursors of the second — sent to the nations and to Israel in the counterfeit's own days, preaching in his face that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God, crucified, risen, ascended, and coming to judge. The mystic Anne Catherine Emmerich (through Brentano's pen, with the reservations this book has kept throughout) saw them in vision waiting still in the paradise of God for the hour of their sending. Their dress is sackcloth — the Baptist's wardrobe, penance made visible — and Holzhauser pauses over the detail to shame the soft clergy of every age; their pulpit is the street; their diocese, in the age of multiplied travel the angel foretold to Daniel, is the earth.

They cannot be harmed until their testimony is finished — that is the strange sovereignty of their 1260 days: "if any man will hurt them, in this manner must he be slain" (11:5). But when the days are accomplished, God permits what He long forbade: "the beast that ascendeth out of the

abyss shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them" (11:7). Their bodies lie unburied "in the streets of the great city, which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord also was crucified" (11:8) — Jerusalem, become in those days what her Lord's executioners made her in figure: Sodom for her corruption, Egypt for her Pharaoh. Over the corpses the world holds festival: "they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry: and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them" (11:10) — Scripture's most chilling verse, mankind exchanging presents over the bodies of its last preachers. Holzhauser, reading the "three days and a half" of their exposure as three and a half weeks, sees in this festival the counterfeit's supreme hour, drunk on a victory he mistakes for final. Then the reversal, sudden as Easter: "after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them. And they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that saw them" (11:11); the voice from heaven, *Come up hither*; the ascension of the two before their enemies' eyes — and the counterfeit, attempting in his frenzy to pursue them into the sky and prove his godhead once for all, cast down instead, in Holzhauser's unforgettable page, into the opened earth: the parody of the Ascension ending in the reality of hell, while the earthquake levels a tenth of the city "and the rest were cast into fear, and gave glory to God" (11:13).

While the witnesses preach in the streets, where is the Church? Underground — and the reader must see that this, too, is prophesied in the same breath as the witnesses, for it is the other half of the continual sacrifice's fate. Daniel's mark of the son of perdition is that "the continual sacrifice shall be taken away" (Daniel 12:11) — *taken away*, abolished from the public altars by the antipope's decree as an earlier chapter described; but abolished is not extinguished. The Mass cannot cease from the earth, for Malachias's prophecy of the clean oblation "in every place" and Our Lord's "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matthew 28:20) guarantee the Sacrifice to the end. What the decree will drive from the basilicas, fidelity will carry into the cellars: the Church of the seventh age will be the Church of the catacombs reborn — Mass at midnight in forests and mineshafts and upper rooms, the Host carried in secret to the dying, priests hunted as in the days of Elizabeth's England and revolutionary France and the Soviet night, ordinations in hiding so the succession does not fail, the true pope governing from concealment as Peter governed from prison. The visions of the mystics converge on this picture — Emmerich saw the faithful remnant, small and stripped, gathered in secret around the Sacrament while the dark church stood vast and empty — and history has already rehearsed it so many times that the Christian of that day will need no new manual, only the old courage. Let the reader mark the symmetry that closes the book's argument: the age of the precursor *began* with the abomination standing where the sacrifice had ceased; the age of the consummator will *end* with the sacrifice hidden but unbroken while the abomination sits enthroned — and in both ages, the test of the faithful is the same test, and the treasure is the same treasure. **Where the Mass is, there is the Church.** The simplest peasant who follows the hidden Host will walk through the greatest deception in history unscathed, while the learned who follow the throne and the wonders are lost.

There remains only to bind the tests of this book into one rule a child can keep, and to say what watching means for the reader who closes these pages in the quiet years before the staircase's last step. To that final task the last two chapters turn.

Chapter XII

The Antichrist Equation: A Rule a Child Can Keep

Every age of persecution has forced the Church to compress her treasure into forms small enough to hide and carry: the creed traced in the dust, the fish scratched on a wall, the catechism recited in whispers. The deception of the seventh age will demand the same compression. When the wonders are falling from the sky and the throne itself speaks with a dragon's voice, the believer will not have leisure for commentaries; he will need a rule short enough to hold in a frightened mind at midnight. This chapter forges that rule from everything the book has established, and begs the reader to learn it now, in the quiet, the way sailors learn the lifeboat drill in harbor.

Begin with the order of events, for the order is the armor. Saint Paul is explicit: "the day of the Lord shall not come, unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin be revealed" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The falling away first; the lawless one revealed first; Christ *after*. Therefore the first rule, stated once already and repeated here because it will save souls: **the first "messiah" to appear on the world's stage is the counterfeit.** Whoever comes first, claiming the Name — however radiant his descent, however vast his signs, however unanimous the acclamation of thrones and screens and even sanctuaries — is by that very priority identified. The true Christ does not come to be examined; He comes to judge, "as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west" (Matthew 24:27), with the dead rising and the trumpet sounding and every eye seeing Him at once. Any "Christ" whom the world can meet, interview, follow, and crown — any Christ who *arrives* rather than *appears* — is the wrong one. Our Lord left this instruction with a plainness that shames all commentary: "Then if any man shall say to you: Lo here is Christ, or there, do not believe him... If therefore they shall say to you: Behold he is in the desert, go ye not out: Behold he is in the closets, believe it not" (Matthew 24:23-26).

Now the two tests, drawn from the two touchstones Scripture itself provides. The first is Saint John's, and it tests the *creed*: "Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist, who denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22). Put to any claimant, to any prophet, to any shepherd, one question — *Is Jesus of Nazareth the eternal Son of God, who died on the cross and rose in the flesh?* — and the mask has no answer that preserves it. The counterfeit of the seventh age, as this book has argued, will wear the very name of Jesus while failing this very test: an Isa who accepts the title and refuses the Sonship, who honors the man and denies the Cross — the denial of 692 walking at last on two feet. The second test is Daniel's, and it tests the *deed*: "from the time when the continual sacrifice shall be taken away..." (Daniel 12:11). The man from whose hand the Mass is abolished — driven from the altars of the earth by decree, whatever

reconciling language the decree is dressed in — has by that single act signed his identification, and so has every shepherd who executes it. For the Sacrifice is the one thing the dragon cannot counterfeit and therefore cannot tolerate: he can mimic miracles, thrones, tongues of fire, even resurrection — but not the Body and Blood of the Son he denies.

Set the pieces together and the rule of this book stands complete, crude as a catacomb scratching and, the author submits, as sound:

He who comes first claiming to be the returned Jesus, who denies that Jesus is the Son of God, and who takes away the Mass — he is the Antichrist. Flee him, though the whole world and its shepherds follow him.

Three clauses, three anchors: priority, creed, sacrifice. Let the reader test the rule's strength by trying to imagine its failure — a true Christ whom it would reject, or a counterfeit it would admit. The true Christ cannot trip it, for He comes after, confesses His own Sonship in glory, and comes not to abolish the Sacrifice but to consummate it in the marriage supper of the Lamb. And no counterfeit can pass it, for the counterfeit *must* come first (his whole opportunity is the interval), *must* deny the Sonship (it is the creed of his kingdom and the condition of his patron the dragon), and *must* strike the Mass (it is the one witness he cannot suborn). The rule has no moving parts to break. It requires no learning, no discernment of spirits, no judgment of wonders — Our Lord warned that the signs would be potent enough "to deceive (if possible) even the elect" (Matthew 24:24), so the rule wisely ignores signs altogether. A child can keep it. A grandmother in a cellar can keep it. And the author's hope, if this small book survives him into that age, is precisely there: that some soul in the seventh age, pressed by the acclamation of the world to bow to the radiant claimant, will remember three clauses learned in the quiet years, and stand.

One caution, and the author gives it the more earnestly for having spent this book naming a candidate system: the rule tests *the man*, not the multitude. The Muslim peoples are not the Antichrist; they are, as an earlier chapter argued, the very nations whose homecoming will glorify the sixth age, the author's own kin, first through the door. The equation identifies one person at one hour — and until that hour, the Christian's posture toward the sons of Ismael is not suspicion but the missionary's love, which this author begs God to set on fire in the Church. The watchman who confuses the flock with the wolf has failed his watch twice over.

What then remains? Only the watching itself — what it is, what it is not, and how to live between this page and whatever the years bring. The last chapter is the shortest, because its counsel is the oldest.

Chapter XIII

Epilogue: Watch

The author has spent twelve chapters on numbers, and he ends by telling the reader to hold them loosely. This is not false modesty; it is obedience. "But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone" (Matthew 24:36). Every chronology in this book bows to that verse. If the reckoning from 692 is right, the reader has been given a lamp for the road ahead; if it is wrong, he has lost nothing that matters — because the counsel of the last page is identical in either case, and it is Our Lord's own: "Watch ye therefore, because you know not what hour your Lord will come" (Matthew 24:42).

Notice what watching is not. It is not calculation — the servants in the parable are not praised for guessing the master's arrival but for being found working when he comes (Matthew 24:46). It is not fear — "when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand" (Luke 21:28): heads lifted, not buried. And it is not the hoarding of tinned food and dark surmise that passes for eschatology in our anxious age; the reader who finishes this book with a heavier heart has misread it, for its longest chapters were about a coming mercy — the open door, the converted nations, the clean oblation from the rising of the sun to its going down. The storm in these pages is real, but it is brief, bounded, and lost in advance; the counterfeit's own numbers are the measure of his leash, and the last word over him was spoken from the Cross he denies.

What, then, does watching look like, for the reader who closes this book on an ordinary evening in the fifth age? It looks almost disappointingly ordinary, and that is its glory. Live in the state of grace, and return to it quickly when you fall: confession is the drill for every tribulation. Hear Mass — and hear it knowing now what it is: the continual sacrifice, the treasure of both ages, the thing the last enemy will strike because it is the thing heaven prizes; a Christian who has understood this book can never again attend Mass carelessly. Pray the prayers the Mother of God has asked for in this age, for she was sent to Fatima precisely as the watchman's herald. Learn the faith well enough to give it away, for the sixth age will need catechists in torrents, and the harvest-hands are trained before the harvest. Love the Muslim you know — the author asks this as his personal petition to every reader — with the confident, patient, unpatronizing love owed to a brother whose homecoming is already written; whoever befriends a son of Ismael now is laying table-settings for the great banquet. Teach your children the three-clause rule of the previous chapter as your grandmothers taught the rosary: lightly, firmly, forever. And keep, at the bottom of everything, the watchman's secret, which is that he does not actually watch for the enemy — he

watches for the Master. The Antichrist merits a chapter; Christ merits the life.

The author began this book as a warning, and he ends it as a confession of hope. He was born under the abomination's long shadow, in the very peninsula of the denial, and grace found him there — proof in one man's skin that no chapter of this book is about anyone's fate being sealed. What God did for one Saudi He intends, this author believes with all his heart, for the nations: the staircase of Daniel climbs not to a precipice but to a door, and the door is already named — Philadelphia, the church of brotherly love, before whom the Lord has set an open door which no man can shut. Whether it opens in 2027 or in God's better time, it opens. "He that giveth testimony of these things, saith: Surely I come quickly: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Apocalypse 22:20).

Watch, therefore. And be found at the altar.

FUAD ALTHUBYANI

Chapter XIV

Appendix: Sources and the Weights of Authority

The reader deserves to know, in one place, the ranks of authority on which this book has drawn, for they are not equal, and the author has tried never to let a lower rank borrow the voice of a higher.

Sacred Scripture is the Word of God and the foundation of every argument here: chiefly Daniel 12, Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2, 1 John 2 and 4, and the Apocalypse of Saint John, cited throughout from the Douay-Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate. Where this book's argument rests on Scripture — the sequence of the falling away and the lawless one, the tests of the Antichrist, the two witnesses, the taking away of the continual sacrifice — it rests on rock.

The interpretation of Scripture is another matter, and the reader must distinguish the text from this author's reading of it. The year-day principle, the identification of the abomination with the Dome of the Rock, the count from 692, and above all the thesis of the Muslim counterfeit-Isa are *interpretations* — the last of them the author's own synthesis, which he has flagged as such in its place and flags again here. The Fathers more commonly expected the son of perdition from another quarter, and the Church has defined nothing on the question. Where this book goes beyond the tradition, it goes at the author's risk, not the Church's.

The Venerable Bartholomew Holzhauser (1613-1658), whose cause for beatification the Church has opened and whose heroic virtue she has recognized, supplies the book's architecture: the seven ages, the figure-and-reality principle, and the commentary on Apocalypse 11. His commentary is a private theological work, venerable but not magisterial; it ends at chapter 15, and everything in this book concerning chapters 16-22 is therefore built from Scripture, the common tradition, and later commentators — chiefly Father E. Sylvester Berry's "The Apocalypse of St. John" (1921) — never from Holzhauser, whose name must not be stretched over pages he did not write. Where this book departs from his arithmetic (his 1277½ years against Daniel's plain figures), it has said so.

Approved private revelation — Fatima (1917) above all, and La Salette (1846) — carries the Church's judgment that it is worthy of belief, though no Catholic is obliged to believe even these. The author has used them for what they say and no more.

Unapproved or contested sources stand last and lowest: the visions published under the name of Anne Catherine Emmerich, whose transmission through Clemens Brentano the Church formally set aside from her beatification cause, so that the books cannot be certified as her words; the

chronology of the Crucifixion drawn from those books (the AD 27 calculation of the third chapter), which conflicts with Luke 3:1 and the common scholarship, and which this book has offered strictly as a curiosity; the apparitions of Garabandal and others still under the Church's judgment; and the modern Mecca-Babylon speculation, which the tenth chapter weighed and found wanting. Nothing in this book's argument stands or falls with any of these; the reader who strikes them all out will find every chapter's spine intact.

Finally, **the author's chronology** — 1952, 1982, 2027 — is a hypothesis, bound in the fifth chapter to its own terms of failure, and submitted, like every line of this book, to the judgment of the Holy Catholic Church, in which the author hopes to live, watch, and die.

Laus Deo Virginique Matri.